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SUBJECT: CZECH COMMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE DECEMBER EU GAERC

REF: A. STATE 127023

1B. STATE 124618

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Emboff spoke with Magdalena Janesova of the Czech MFA Department of Common Foreign and Security Policy prior to the December 8-9 EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC). Of note were her comments on: the Middle East, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Pakistan. End Summary.

Middle East

¶2. (SBU) Janesova noted that at this moment in time the EU is in a bit of a "waiting mode" with respect to the Middle East, particularly since there are upcoming elections in Israel, which are expected to set the tone for Israeli engagement in the future. Janesova, who accompanied FM Schwarzenberg on his visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories on November 30 and December 1, commented that while the Czechs are still interested in upgrading EU-Israeli relations during their EU Presidency, quite a lot of work remains, both within the EU and with Israel, as well as the Palestinians. She also stated that while the Palestinians were consulted about a possible EU-Israel Summit in May or June of 2009, and that they initially expressed understanding for an upgrade in relations as well as interest in something perhaps being done for the Palestinians, this has now changed and the Palestinians are expressing opposition to the idea. Janesova also commented that the Middle East remains on the agenda of just about every EU foreign policy related meeting, however, until the political situation in Israel becomes clearer, the EU remains focused on expressing support for the Annapolis process and encouraging dialogue.

Democratic Republic of Congo

¶3. (SBU) The EU plans to announce an additional 45.6M euros in additional humanitarian assistance for the DRC, according to Janesova. She also noted that the idea of a multi-national force for the DRC has been widely discussed, however, the EU does not plan to put together such a force as many EU members opposed the idea. Some of the concerns focused on the fact that EU battlegroups were not designed for such a situation, nor to complement other forces. As well, some EU member states thought more needed to be done to address conflicts in the EU's backyard and that this proposed mission for the DRC did not fit well with the EU's priorities and limited resources.

Pakistan

¶4. (SBU) The Czech MFA Departments for CFSP and the Asia and Pacific Region have appreciated our details related to the Friends of Democratic Pakistan and the proposed donor conference to support the IMF stand-by arrangement reached with Pakistan. They share our concerns related to Pakistan future path and the need to encourage Pakistan in its efforts to fight terrorism. According to Janesova, Czech FM Schwarzenberg would like to enhance the EU's dialogue and engagement with Pakistan and he has proposed to his EU colleagues, arranging an EU-Pakistan troika meeting in Islamabad in February, perhaps in conjunction with the EU's participation at a Friends of Pakistan meeting around the same time. The Czechs have promised to keep us apprised of any developments in this area.

Graber